

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

September 23, 2018

Unacceptable Baptism

by Frank Himmel

Upon his arrival at Ephesus Paul found twelve disciples. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They replied that they had never even heard of the Holy Spirit. Further questioning revealed that they had been baptized into John's baptism. Paul then explained that John's baptism was temporary, looking forward to Him who was coming after him, that is, Jesus. When the twelve heard that, they were baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 19:1-5).

This incident teaches a vital point: not everything called "baptism" is acceptable to God. If it were, there would have been no need to "rebaptize" these men.

The Bible says there is one baptism (Ephesians 4:4).

- It is the immersion in water of one who believes in Jesus and has repented of his sins (Acts 2:37-38; 8:36-38); it is therefore not for infants.
- It is in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
- Its purpose is to wash away sins (Acts 22:16).

- It is a likeness of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, the point at which we have access to the benefits of His death (Romans 6:3-4).
- It results in one's being saved (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21), being added to Christ and to His church (Galatians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 12:14).

What the disciples at Ephesus had done met only some of these criteria. It was therefore not enough. In reality, this was not a case of rebaptism: they had never been properly baptized in the first place.

Much of what is called "baptism" in our day also fails to meet the New Testament criteria. Some sprinkle; some baptize infants; and most baptize, not in order for one to be saved and added to Christ, but to show that one is already saved and already in Christ.

What about you? Have you been baptized as outlined in the Scriptures? If not, where does that leave you? "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). ■



“Speaking the Truth in Love”

by Frank Himmel

“But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ” (Ephesians 4:15).

“Speaking the truth in love”—what picture does that injunction bring to mind? Does it conjure up an image of soft, gentle tones, words of solace, a purely positive message that avoids anything controversial or possibly offensive? If so, you may be surprised to learn that at times it may mean the opposite.

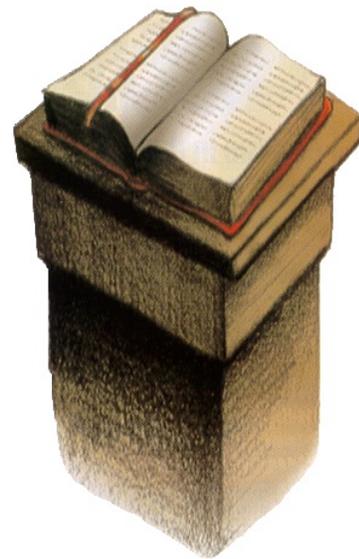
John the Baptist called some in his audience a brood of vipers (a bunch of snakes) and told them they needed to show in their lives evidence of the commitment to God they professed (Matthew 3:7-8). “Speaking the truth in love” sometimes requires startling those who are just going through the motions of being religious.

Jesus spoke at length about specific practices of His day which were contrary to God’s will (Matthew 23:1-36). Some of them were religious activities, others reflected wrong moral standards. “Speaking the truth in love” necessitates plain, pointed preaching, the kind that leaves hearers with no doubt concerning what is right and wrong conduct.

The Apostle Paul called the name of those who were teaching error and identified their error (2 Timothy 2:17-18). He did so because they had “upset the faith of some.” “Speaking the truth in love” demands an honest examination of doctrine, exposing both what is false and who is advocating it.

To be sure, John, Jesus, Paul, and the other New Testament preachers were often gentle, positive, and encouraging in what they had to say. Yet they were also firm and clear, unafraid to use strong language when circumstances called for it.

In short, “speaking the truth in love” is so loving the truth that one would not sacrifice, pervert, or compromise it. It is so loving people that no truth will be withheld, even that which may be hard to say or unpleasant to hear. It is conveying the truth as tactfully as is effective. ■



Service Leaders for the Week		
	Sunday	Wednesday
GREETER	Chris Brooks	Josh Baucom
SONG LEADER	Gary Hagler	Greg Winget
OPENING PRAYER	Albert Lee Harrison	
LORD’S SUPPER		
BREAD	Greg Winget	
CUP	Carlos Garcia	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Jason Chandler	
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Bruce Williams
CLOSING PRAYER	Kerry Gray	Ian Brown